

PMEL Tsunami Forecast Series: Vol. x A Tsunami Forecast Model for Westport, Washington

(Draft)

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Abstract

This study describes the development, validation, and testing of a tsunami forecast model for Westport, Washington. Based on the Method of Splitting Tsunamis (MOST) model, the forecast model is capable of simulating four hours of tsunami wave dynamics at a resolution of approximately 90 m in 10-minute computational time. A reference inundation model of higher resolution of 1/3 arc-sec (~10 m) was also developed in parallel, to provide modeling references for the forecast model. Both models were tested for fourteen past tsunamis and a set of eighteen simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis. The good agreement between the model computations and observations, along with the numerical consistency between the model results for the maximum amplitude and velocity, provide a quantitative validation and reliable robustness and stability testing of the forecast model.

1 Background and Objective

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Center for Tsunami Research at NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL) has developed a tsunami forecasting system for operational use by NOAA's two Tsunami Warning Centers located in Hawaii and Alaska (Titov, 2005; Titov, 2009). The forecast system combines real-time deepocean tsunami measurements from Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunami (DART) buoys (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Bernard et al., 2006, Bernard and Titov, 2007) with the Method of Splitting Tsunami (MOST) model, a suite of finite difference numerical codes based on nonlinear long wave approximation (Titov and Synolakis, 1998; Titov and Gonzalez, 1997; Synolakis, et al., 2008) to produce real-time forecasts of tsunami arrival time, heights, periods and inundation. To achieve accurate and detailed forecast of tsunami impact for specific sites, high-resolution tsunami forecast models are under development for United States coastal communities at risk (Tang et al., 2008^a; 2009^a). The resolution of these models has to be high enough to resolve the dynamics of a tsunami inside a particular harbor, including influences of major harbor structures such as breakwaters. These models have been integrated as crucial components into the forecast system.

Presently, a system of 37 DART buoys (32 U.S.-, 1 Chilean-, and 4 Australian- owned) is monitoring tsunami activity in the Pacific Ocean (Figure 1) (48 DART buoys globally). The precomputed propagation models currently have 1106 scenarios to cover Pacific tsunami sources (1691 globally), and the high-resolution forecast inundation models are now set up for 43 U.S. coastal communities. The fully implemented system will use real-time data from the DART

network to provide high-resolution tsunami forecasts for at least 75 communities in the U.S. (by 2013) (Titov, 2009). Since its first testing in the 17 November 2003 Rat Island tsunami, the forecast system has produced experimental real-time forecasts for twelve tsunamis in the Pacific and Indian oceans (*Titov et al.*, 2005; *Wei et al.*, 2008; *Titov*, 2009). The forecast methodology has also been tested with the data from nine additional events that produced the deep ocean data.

The report describes the development, testing and applications of the Kahului forecast model. The objective in developing this model is to provide NOAA's Tsunami Warning Centers the ability to assess danger posed to Kahului following tsunami generation in the Pacific Ocean Basin with a goal to provide accurate and timely forecasts to enable the community to respond appropriately. A secondary objective is to explore the potential tsunami impact from earthquakes at major subduction zones in Pacific to the city by using the developed forecast model. Wavelet analysis was applied to investigate Kahului harbor and local responses to tsunami waves.

The report is organized as follows. Section 2 briefly introduces NOAA's tsunami forecast methodology. Section 3 describes the model development. Section 4 presents the results and discussion, which includes sensitivity of the forecast model to model setup and friction coefficients, model validation, verification, and testing for past and simulated tsunamis. A tsunami hazard assessment study utilizing the validated forecast model is also included. A summary and conclusion are provided in section 5.

2 Forecast Methodology

NOAA's real-time tsunami forecasting scheme is a process that comprises of two steps: (1) construction of a tsunami source via inversion of deep ocean DART observations with precomputed tsunami source functions; and (2) coastal predictions by running high-resolution forecast models in real time (*Titov et al.*, 1999; *Titov et al.*, 2005; Tang *et al.*, 2009^a). The DART-constrained tsunami source, the corresponding offshore scenario from the tsunami source function database, and high-resolution forecast models cover the entire evolution of earthquake-generated tsunamis, generation, propagation and coastal inundation, providing a complete tsunami forecast capability.

2.1 Construction of A Tsunami Source Based on DART Observations and Tsunami Source Functions

Several real-time data sources, including seismic data, coastal tide gage and deep-ocean data have been used for tsunami warning and forecast (*Satake et al.*, 2008; *Whitmore*, 2003; *Titov*, 2009). NOAA's strategy for the real-time forecasting is to use deep-ocean measurements at DART buoys as the primary data source due to several key features. (1) The buoys provide a direct measure of tsunami waves, unlike seismic data, which are an indirect measure of tsunamis. (2) The deep ocean tsunami measurements are in general the earliest tsunami information available, since tsunamis propagate much faster in deep ocean than in shallow coastal area where coastal tide gages are used for tsunami measurements. (3) Compared to coastal tide gages, DART data with a high signal to noise ratio can be obtained without interference from harbor

and local shelf effects. (4) Wave dynamics of tsunami propagation in deep ocean is assumed to be linear (Liu, 2009). This linear process allows application of efficient inversion schemes.

Time series of tsunami observations in deep-ocean can be decomposed into a linear combination of a set of tsunami source functions in the time domain by a linear least squares method. We call coefficients obtained through this inversion process tsunami source coefficients. The magnitude computed from the sum of the moment of tsunami source functions multiplied by the corresponding coefficients is referred as the tsunami moment magnitude (T_{Mw}) , to distinguish from the seismic moment magnitude M_w , which is the magnitude of the associated earthquake source. While the seismic and tsunami sources are in general not the same, this approach provides a link between the seismically-derived earthquake magnitude and the tsunami observation-derived tsunami magnitude.

During real-time tsunami forecast, seismic waves propagate much faster than tsunami waves so the initial seismic magnitude can be estimated before the DART measurements are available. Since time is of the essence, the initial tsunami forecast is based on the seismic magnitude only. The T_{Mw} will update the forecast when it is available via DART inversion using the tsunami source function database.

Titov et al.(1999; 2001) conducted sensitivity studies on far-field deep-water tsunamis to different parameters of elastic deformation model described in Gusiakov (1978) and Okada (1985). The results showed source magnitude and location essentially define far-field tsunami signals for a wide range of subduction zone earthquakes. Other parameters have secondary influence and can be pre-defined during forecast. Based on these results, tsunami source function databases for Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans have been built using pre-defined source parameters, length = 100 km, width = 50 km, slip = 1 m, rake = 90 and rigidity = 4.5 x 10^{10} N/m². Other parameters are location-specific; details of the databases are described in Gica et al. (2008). Each tsunami source function is equivalent to a tsunami from a typical $M_w = 7.5$ earthquake with defined source parameters. Figure 1 shows the locations of tsunami source functions in Pacific Ocean.

The database can provide offshore forecast of tsunami amplitudes and all other wave parameters immediately once the inversion is complete. The tsunami source, which combines real-time tsunami measurements with tsunami source functions, provides an accurate offshore tsunami scenario without additional time-consuming model runs.

2.2 Real-time Coastal Predictions by High-Resolution Forecast Models.

High-resolution forecast models are designed for the final stage of the evolution of tsunami waves: coastal runup and inundation. Once the DART-constrained tsunami source is obtained (as a linear combination of tsunami source functions), the pre-computed time series of offshore wave height and depth-averaged velocity from the model propagation scenario are applied as the dynamic boundary conditions for the forecast models. This saves the simulation time of basin wide tsunami propagation. Tsunami inundation is a highly nonlinear process, therefore a linear combination would not, in general, provide accurate solutions. A high-resolution model is also required to resolve shorter tsunami wavelengths nearshore with accurate bathymetric/topographic data. The forecast models are constructed with the Method of Splitting

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Tsunami (MOST) model, a finite difference tsunami inundation model based on nonlinear shallow-water wave equations (*Titov and Gonzalez*, 1997). Each forecast model contains three telescoping computational grids with increasing resolution, covering regional, intermediate and nearshore areas. Runup and inundation are computed at the coastline.

The highest resolution grid includes the population center and tide stations for forecast verification. The grids are derived from the best available bathymetric/topographic data at the time of development, and will be updated as new survey data become available.

The forecast models are optimized for speed and accuracy. By reducing the computational areas and grid resolutions, each model is optimized to provide 4-hour event forecasting results in minutes of computational time using one single processor, while still providing good accuracy for forecasting. To ensure forecast accuracy at every step of the process, the model outputs are validated with historical tsunami records and compared to numerical results from a reference inundation model with higher resolutions and larger computational domains. In order to provide warning guidance for long duration during a tsunami event, each forecast model has been tested to output up to 24-hour simulation since tsunami generation.

3 Model Development

3.1 Forecast area and tsunami data

Grays Harbor is an estuarine bay located on the southwest Pacific coast of Washington state (Fig. 2a). The bay is 17 miles (27 km) long and 12 miles (19 km) wide. The Chehalis River flows into its eastern end, where the city of Aberdeen stands at that river's mouth, on its north bank, with the somewhat smaller city of Hoquiam immediately to its northwest, along the bayshore. The northern peninsula is largely covered by the community of Ocean Shores, while the southern peninsula stands the town of Westport.

Westport Marina is the largest coastal marina in the Pacific Northwest and home to Washington State's largest charter fishing fleet (Fig.2b). This full-service Marina offers moorage space for 600 charter, commercial, and sport fishing vessels, plus a wide range of pleasure craft. A Nation Ocean Service water level station in Westport Marina was established on June 7th, 1982. The present installation was on March 20th, 2006 (http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/). The water level sensor is located in the vicinity of the Chevron fuel pier in Westport Marina. At the sensor, the mean tidal range (MN) is 2.119 m, mean sea level (MSL) is 2.386 m, and mean high water level (MHW) is 3.451 m, and. Mean high water is used as the reference level for the forecast model to provide a worst case for inundation forecast.

Figure 3 shows the population density data in the Grays Harbor County. The population in Aberdeen ranks the highest, 16,440 as in 2009, while 8,765 in Hoquiam, 4,860 in Ocean Shores, and 2,345 in Westport (http://www.ghedc.com/tblcensus.html#population).

Tsunami time series data are available for four past tsunamis since 2006 at the Westport tide station. The largest wave height of 25 cm was recorded during the 15 November 2006 Kuril Islands tsunami.

3.2 Bathymetry and Topography

Two digital elevation models (DEMs) were developed, One with medium resolution of 3 arcsecond (90 m), which was developed at NCTR in 2010, covering the Pacific coast in Washington; and a high resolution DEM of 1/3 arc-second (10 m) covering Westport, WA and Astoria, Oregon (Fig. 6) developed at NGDC (Tylor et al., 2008). Both grids include topographic and bathymetric elevations. The source grids were compiled from the best available data sources at the time of development.

3.3 Model Setup

By sub-sampling from the DEMs described in section 3.2, two sets of computational grids were derived, the Westport reference inundation model (Fig. 4) and the optimized forecast model (Fig. 5). The forecast model consists of three levels of telescoped grids with increasing resolution, while the reference model has four grids to better resolve the fine structure of the Westport Marina. In Figure 4, the solid boxes in red indicate boundaries of the nested reference model grids while the black dashed boxes represent the corresponding boundaries of the forecast model. Grid details at each level and input parameters are summarized in Table 2. For a simulation of a 4-hour event, the optimized forecast model takes less than 10 minutes of CPU time on a Linux system using a single 3.6 GHz Xeon processor, while the reference model takes about 41 hours.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Validation

Both the Westport reference and forecast models were tested with sixteen historical tsunamis summarized in Table 1. Figure 6 shows the modeling results and observations at the Westport tide station. The observations from the 2007 Kuril Islands tsunami are within the noise level (Fig. 5.2). Tsunami time series data are available for four past tsunamis, the 2006 Tonga, 2006 Kuril Islands, 2009 Samoa and 2010 Chile tsunamis at the Westport tide station. The modeled amplitudes agree reasonable with the observations. Most of the data are with low signal to noise ratio and unable to indentify the arrival time of the tsunamis. The largest wave height of 25 cm was recorded during the 15 November 2006 Kuril Islands tsunami.

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4.2 Verification

The computed maximum water elevation above MHW and maximum velocity of the sixteen tsunamis are plotted in Figure 7. Both the reference and forecast models produced similar patterns and values. The open coast experiences high amplitude waves than those within the Grays Harbor.

4.3 Robustness and stability tests

Recorded historical tsunamis provide only a limited number of events, from limited locations. More comprehensive test cases of destructive tsunamis with different directionalities are needed to check the stability and robustness for the forecast model. The same set of eighteen simulated T_{Mw} 9.3 tsunamis as in Tang *et al.* (2008^a, 2009^b) was selected here for further examination. Results computed by the forecast model are compared with those from the high-resolution reference model in Figures 8 and 9. Both models were numerically stable for all of the scenarios. In general, waveforms and maximum water elevation computed by the forecast model agree well with those from the reference model in most of the forecast area. One exception is with inside the Marina when the first waves exceed 2 m. For example, the forecast model overestimate the first peak (4.5 m) for the Mw 9.3 Cascadia scenario while the reference model shows 2.5m. That is due to the 3-sec resolution for the forecast model is unable to well resolve the small entrances and breakwater for Westport Marina. A D-grid just cover the Marina with finer resolution can be implemented in the forecast model with the MOST version 4 in the future.

Tsunami waves in the study area vary significantly for the eighteen magnitude 9.3 scenarios. These results show the complexity and high nonlinearity of tsunami waves nearshore, which again demonstrate the value of the forecast model for providing accurate site-specific forecast details. The No. 5 and 6 scenarios at Cascadia subduction generate severe inundation in the open coast. The computed maximum water elevation reaches nearly 4.5 m at the tide station.

5 Summary and Conclusions

A tsunami forecast model was developed for the coastal community of Westport, Washington. The computational grids for the forecast model were derived from the best available bathymetric and topographic data sources. The forecast model is optimizedly constructed at a resolution of 3-arc-sec (~90 m) to enable a 4-hr inundation simulation within 10-minute computational time. A reference inundation model of higher resolution of 1/3 arc-sec (~10 m) was also developed in parallel, to provide modeling references for the forecast model. Both models were tested for fourteen past tsunamis and a set of eighteen simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis.

The modeled amplitudes agree reasonable with the observations at Westport tide station for four past tsunamis. The open coast experiences high amplitude waves than those within the Grays Harbor or Westport Marina.

Both models were numerically stable for all of the tested scenarios. In general, waveforms and maximum water elevation computed by the forecast model agree well with those from the reference model in most of the forecast area except within the Westport Marina the forecast model overestimate the first peak when it is exceed 2 m. That is due to the 3-sec resolution for the forecast model is unable to well resolve the small entrances and breakwater for Westport Marina. A D-grid just cover the Marina with finer resolution can be implemented in the forecast model with the MOST version 4 in the future.

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The study suggests considering points on the open coast as warning points for this area beside the Westport tide gage, due to its protection from the open coast by both the Grays Harbor and the Westport Marina with narrow entrance and breakwaters.

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Tables and Figures

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Table 1 Tsunami sources and maximum wave height recorded at Kahului tide station for fourteen past tsunamis.

	Tsunami		Earthquake	Location		Sub.	Seismic	Tsunami magnitud	Tsunami source
No.	ID	Area	Date Time (UTC)	Lat (°)	Lon (°)	zone	magnitude (M _W)	e	
							8.5 (Lopez&Okal,		
1	194604	Unimak	1946.04.01 12:28:56	53.32N	163.19W	AACC	2006)	² 8.5	7.5*b23+19.7*b24+3.7*b25
2	195211	Kamchatka	1952.11.04 16:58:26.0	52.75N	159.50E	KKJI	9.0 (USGS)	² 8.7	
3	195703	Andreanof	1957.03.09 14:22:31.9	51.292N	175.629W	AACC	8.6 (USGS)	² 8.7	31.4*a15+10.6*a16+12.2*a17
4	196005	Chile	1960.05.22 19:11:14	39.5S	74.5W	SASZ	9.5 (Kanamori & Cipar, 1974)		
5	196403	Alaska	1964.03.28 03:36:14	61.10N	147.50W	AACC	9.2 (USGS)	$^{2}9.0$	Tang et al. (2006)
6	199410	West Kuril Is.	1994.10.04 13:23:28.5	43.6N	147.63E	KKJI	8.3 (CMT)	8.1	9.00*a20
7	199606	Andreanof	1996.06.10 04:04:03.4	51.478N	177.41W	AACC	7.9 (CMT)	7.8	2.40*a15+0.80*b16
8	200106	Peru	2001.06.23 20:34:23.3	17.28S	72.71W	SASZ	8.4 (CMT)	8.2	5.70*a15+2.90*b16+1.98*a16 3.6m*(100x100km), 109#rake,
9	200309	Hokkaido	2003.09.25 19:50:38.2	42.21N	143.84E	KKJI	8.3 (CMT)	8.0	20#dip, 230#strike, 25m depth
10	200311	Rat Is.	2003.11.17 06:43:31	51.14N	177.86E	AACC	7.7 (CMT)	7.8	¹ 2.81*b11
11	200605	Tonga	2006.05.03 15:26:39	20.39S	173.47W	NZKT	8.0 (CMT)	8.0	6.6*b29 (Tang et al., 2008 ¹)
12	200611	Kuril Is.	2006.11.15 11:15:8.0	46.71N	154.33E	KKJI	8.3 (CMT)	8.1	¹ 4*a12+0.5*b12+2*a13+1.5*b13
13	200701	Kuril Is.	2007.01.13 04:23:48.1	46.17N	154.80E	KKJI	8.1 (CMT)	7.9	-3.64*b13
14	200708	Peru	2007.08.15 23:41:57.9	13.73S	77.04W	SASZ	8.0 (CMT)	8.1	¹ 4.1*a9+4.32*b9 (Wei et al., 208)
15	200929	Samoa	2009.09.29 17:48:26.8	15.13S	171.97W	NTSZ	8.1	8.1	3.96xa34+3.96xb34
16	201002	Chile	2010.02.27 6:35:15.4	35.95S	73.15W	CSSZ	8.8	8.8	

^{1:} The tsunami source was obtained during real time and applied to forecast.

^{2:} Preliminary result.3. Trough reached gage limit.

Table 2 MOST setups of Westport reference and forecast models.

Gri d	Region	Reference Model			Forecast model			
u	Region	Coverage Lon. (°E)	Cell Size	Time Step	Coverage Lon. (°E)	Cell Size	Time Step	
		Lat. (°N)	(")	(sec)	Lat. (°N)	(")	(sec)	
A	WA	226.0-237.0	36	3.0	232.945-236.945	120	14	
		43.00 – 52.00	(1101 x 901)		44.6833-48.95	(121 x 129)		
В	Southwest	234.95 – 236.9	6	0.6	234.95 - 236.40	18	2	
	WA	45.96 – 47.30	(1171 x 805)		46.335 - 47.30	(291 x 194)		
C	Grays	235.75 – 236.25	4/3 x 1	1.2	235.75 - 236.25	5 x3	2	
	Harbor	46.8333 – 47.0833	(1351	x 901)	46.8333-47.0833	(361:	x301)	
D	Westport	235.7541-235.9519	1/3	0.3				
		46.8643 – 46.9621	(2137 x	(1057)				
Minir	num offshore	depth (m)	1			<u> </u>		
Water depth for dry land (m)			0.1		0.4			
Fricti	on coefficient	(n^2)	0.0009		0.0009			
Computational time for a 4-hr simulation			~ 41 hours < 10 minutes					

Appendix A.

Since the initial development of the forecast model for Westport, Washington, the parameters for the input file for running the forecast and reference models have been changed to reflect changes to the MOST model code. The following appendix lists the new input files for Westport.

A1. Reference model *.in file for Westport, Washington—updated for 2010

0.001	Minimum amplitude of input offshore wave (m):
1	Input minimum depth for offshore (m)
0.1	Input "dry land" depth for inundation (m)
0.0009	Input friction coefficient (n**2)
1	runup flag for grids A and B (1=yes,0=no)
300.0	blowup limit
0.3	Input time step (sec)
72000	Input amount of steps
10	Compute "A" arrays every n-th time step, n=
2	Compute "B" arrays every n-th time step, n=
4	Compute "C" arrays every n-th time step, n=

150 Input number of steps between snapshots

1 ...Starting from

1Saving grid every n-th node, n=

A2. Forecast model *.in file for Westport, Washington—updated for 2010

0.0001 Minimum amplitude of input offshore wave (m):

1 Input minimum depth for offshore (m) 0.4 Input "dry land" depth for inundation (m)

0.0009 Input friction coefficient (n**2)

1 runup flag for grids A and B (1 = yes, 0 = no)

300.0 blowup limit

2.0 Input time step (sec)9600 Input amount of steps

Compute "A" arrays every n-th time step, n=
Compute "B" arrays every n-th time step, n=
Input number of steps between snapshots

1 ...Starting from

1Saving grid every n-th node, n=

the maximum computed tsunami amplitude in cm for the 13 January 2007 Kurile Islands tsunami in the Pacific. Contours indicate the first arrival time in hours. White lines, sixteen past tsunamis and black lines, eighteen simulated tsunamis tested in this study
Figure 2 Aerial photos of (a) Gray's Harbor and (b) Westport Marina20
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Figure 8 Modeled tsunami time series by the Westport reference and forecast models for simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis. Locations of the tsunamis can be found in Figure 134
Figure 9 Computed maximum amplitude and current in the (a and b) C-grid and (a and d) D-grid of the reference model, and (e and f) C-grid of the forecast model for the simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis38

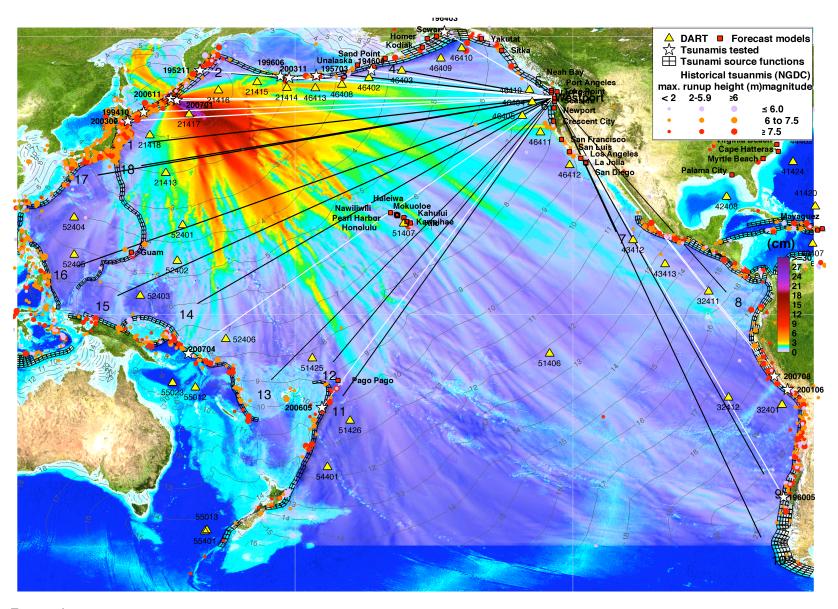


Figure 1 Overview of the Tsunami Forecast System. Filled colors show the offshore forecast of the maximum computed tsunami amplitude in cm for the 13 January 2007 Kurile Islands tsunami in the Pacific. Contours indicate the first arrival time in hours. White lines, sixteen past tsunamis and black lines, eighteen simulated tsunamis tested in this study.



Figure 2 Aerial photos of (a) Gray's Harbor and (b) Westport Marina.

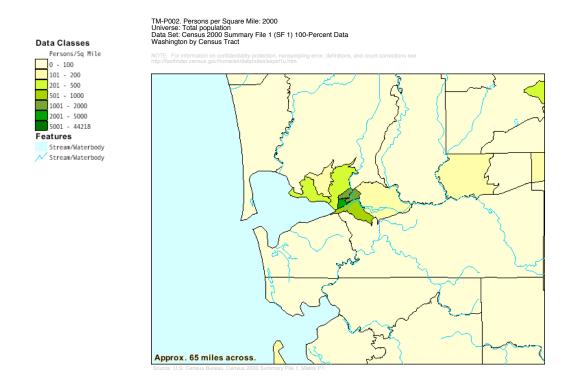
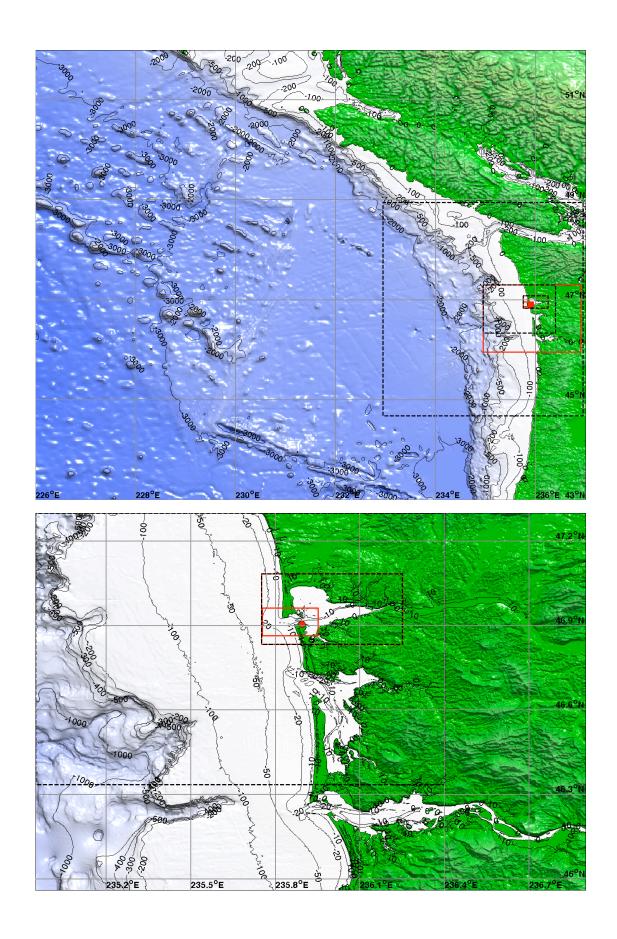


Figure 3 Population density (2000 Census).



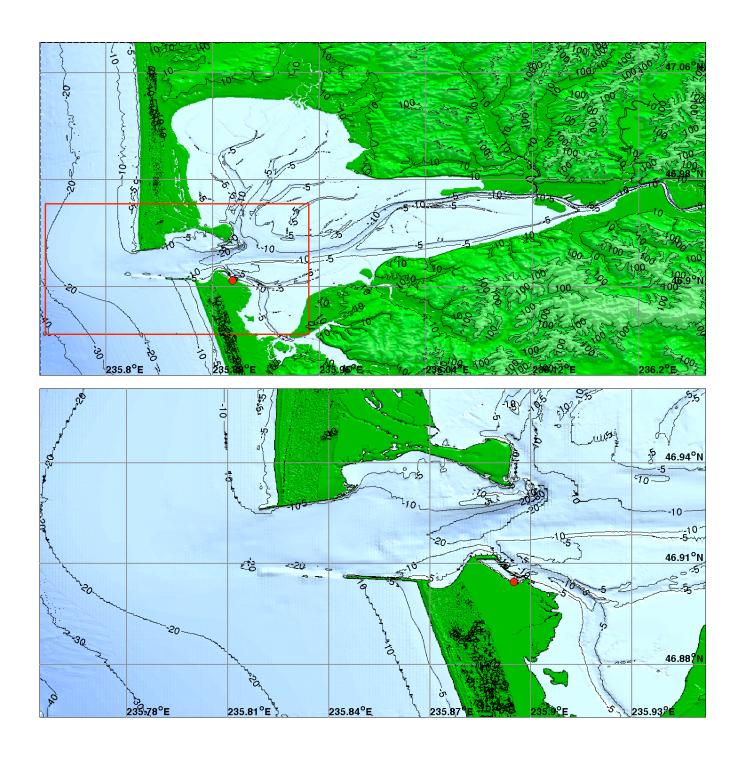


Figure 4 Four layers of grid setup for Westport reference model with resolutions of (2) 36 arcsec, (b) 6 arcsec, (c) 1 sec (\sim 30 m) and (d) 1/3 arcsec (\sim 10 m). Red boxes, boundaries of the telescoping grids for the reference model; black dashed boxes, grid boundaries of the forecast model.

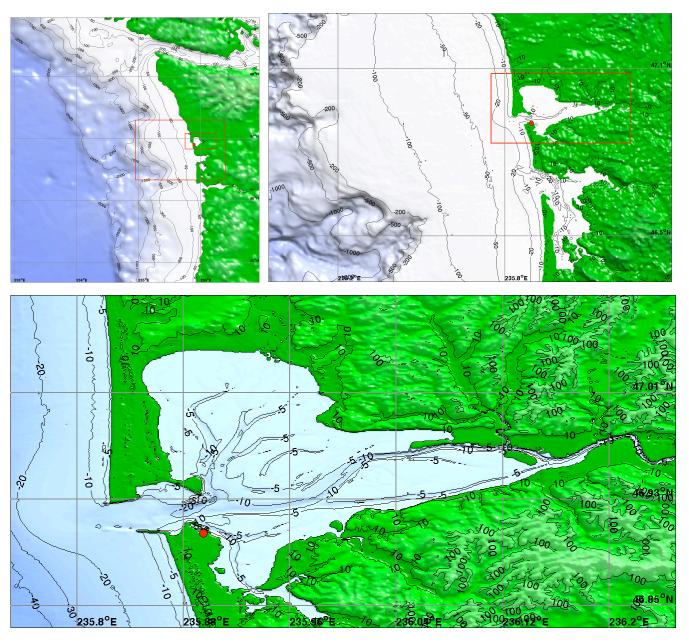
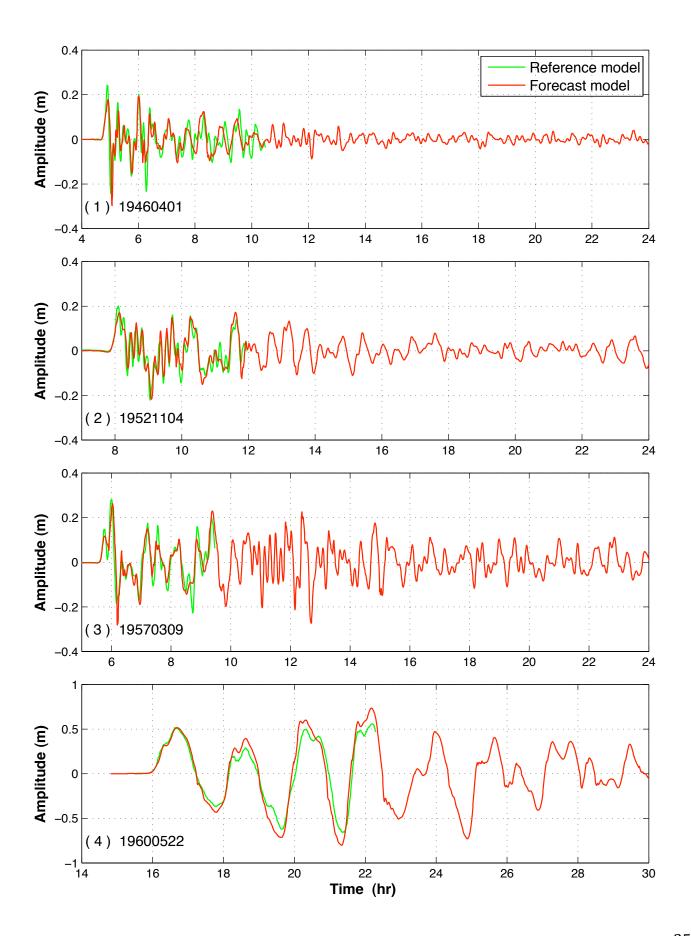
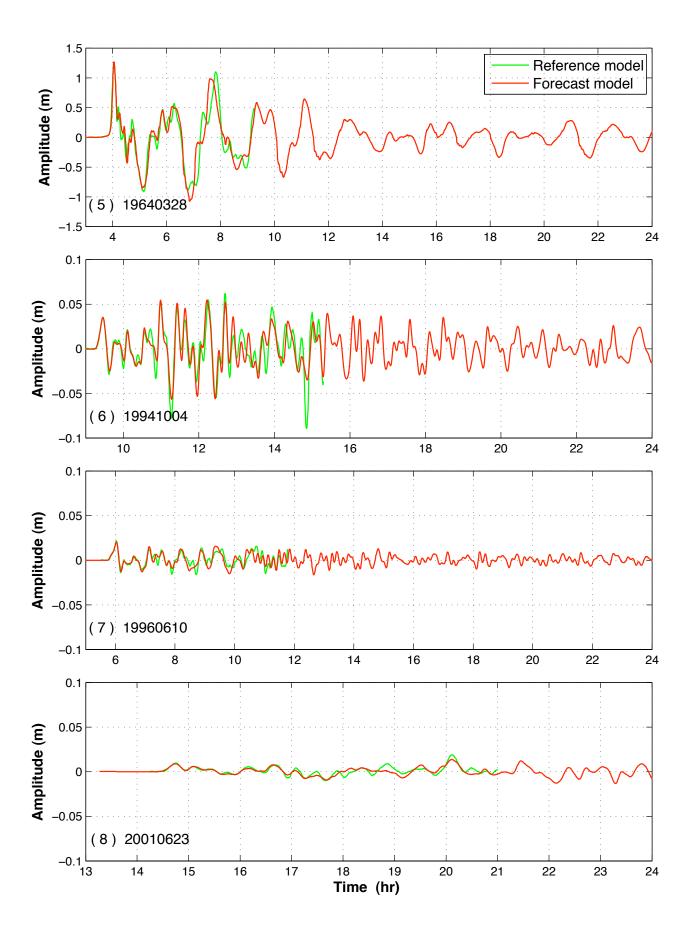
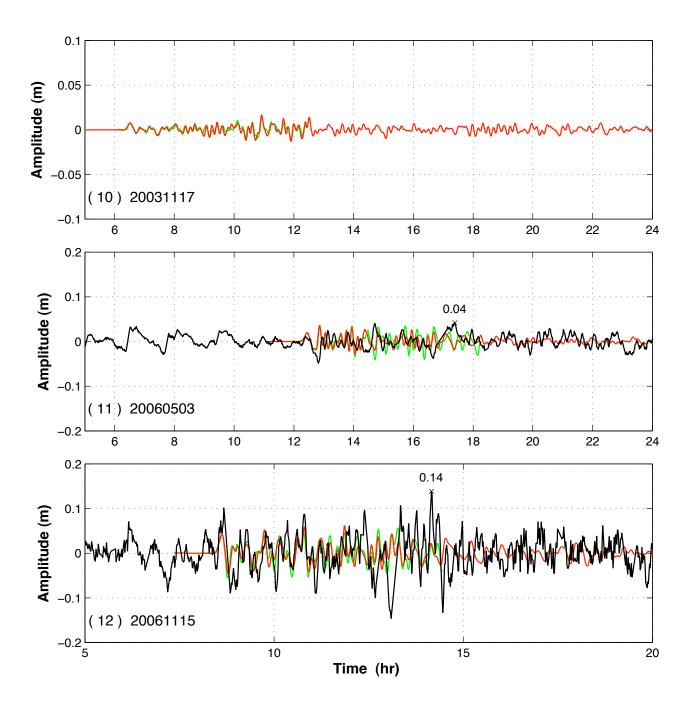


Figure 5 Three layers of grid setup for Westport forecast model with resolutions of (2) 120 arcsec, (b) 18 arcsec, and (c) 5 by 3 sec (~90 m). Red boxes, boundaries of the telescoping grids for the forecast model.







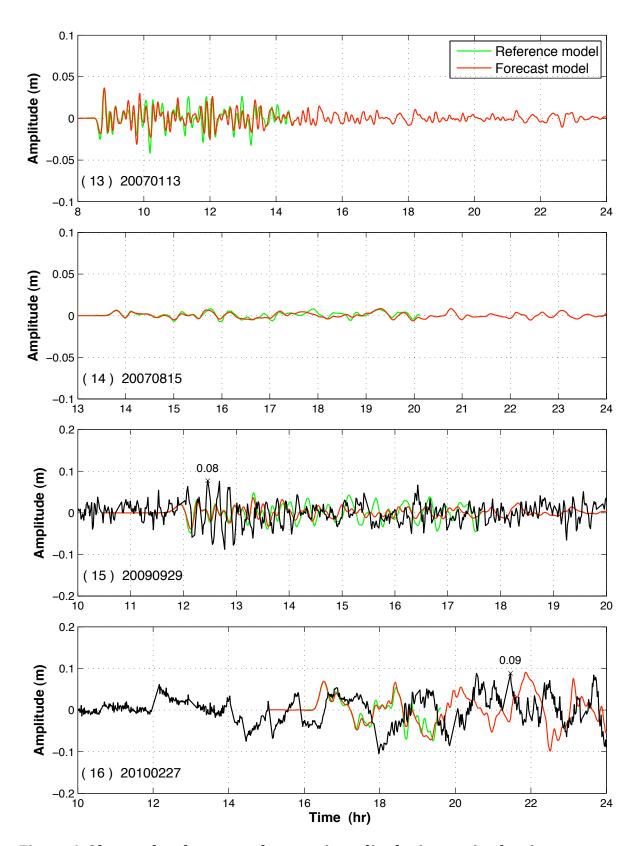
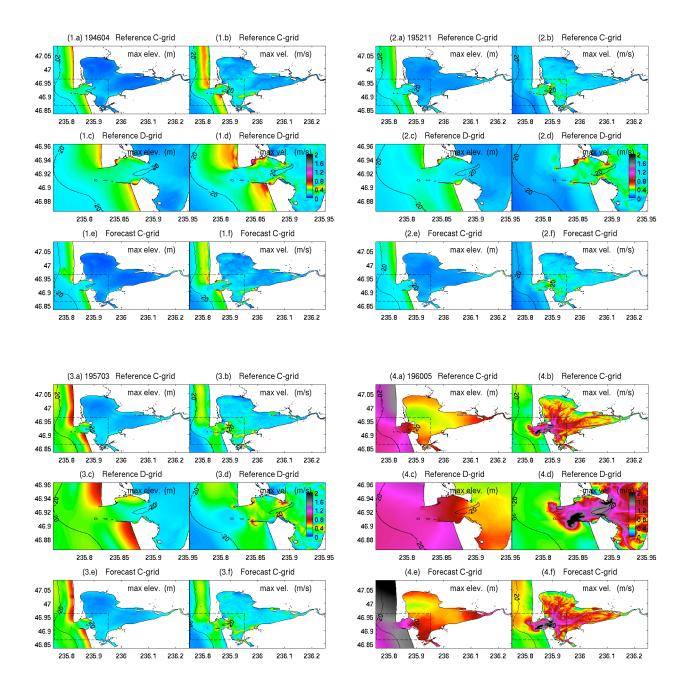
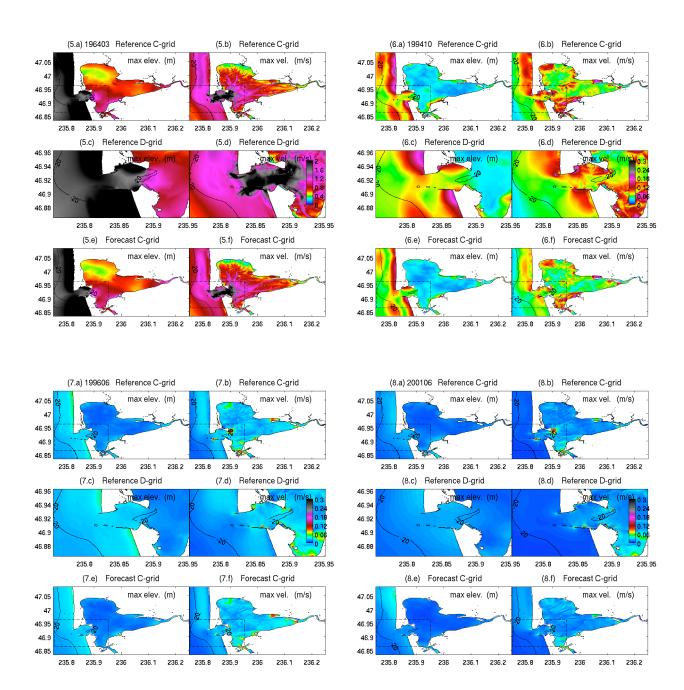
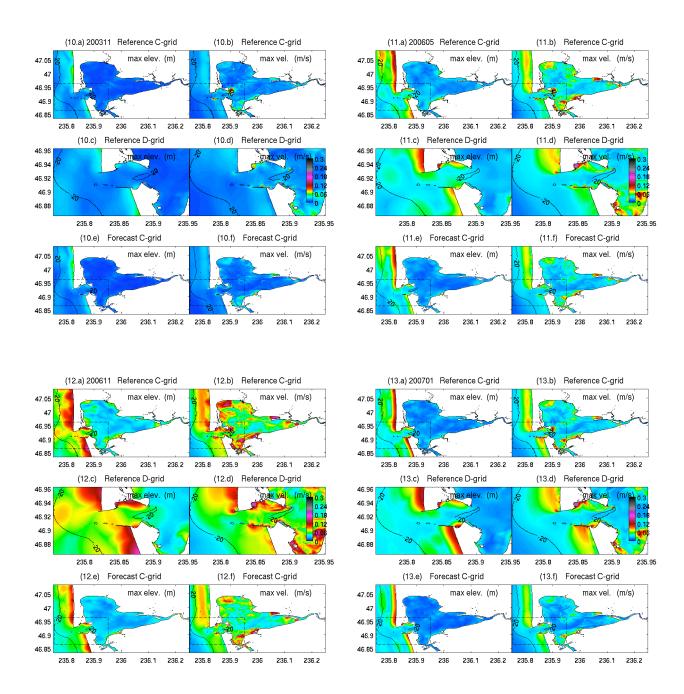


Figure 6 Observed and computed tsunami amplitude time series for sixteen past tsunamis. Black, observations; red forecast model; green, reference model.







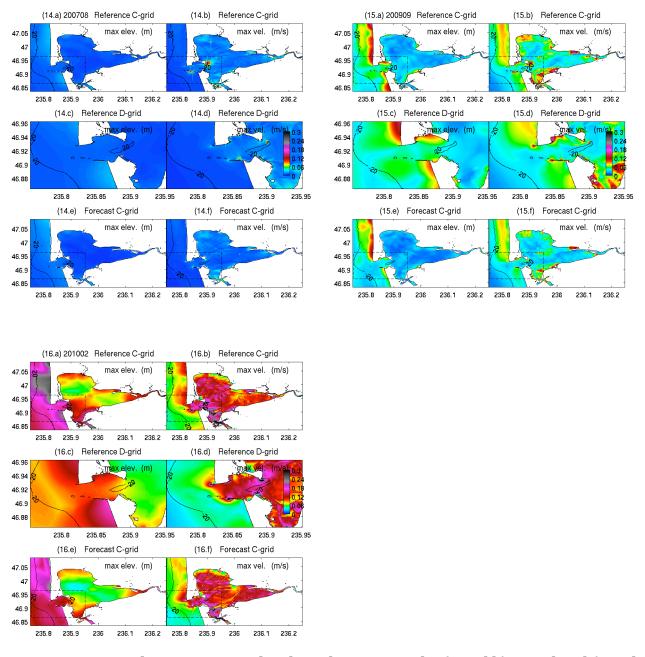
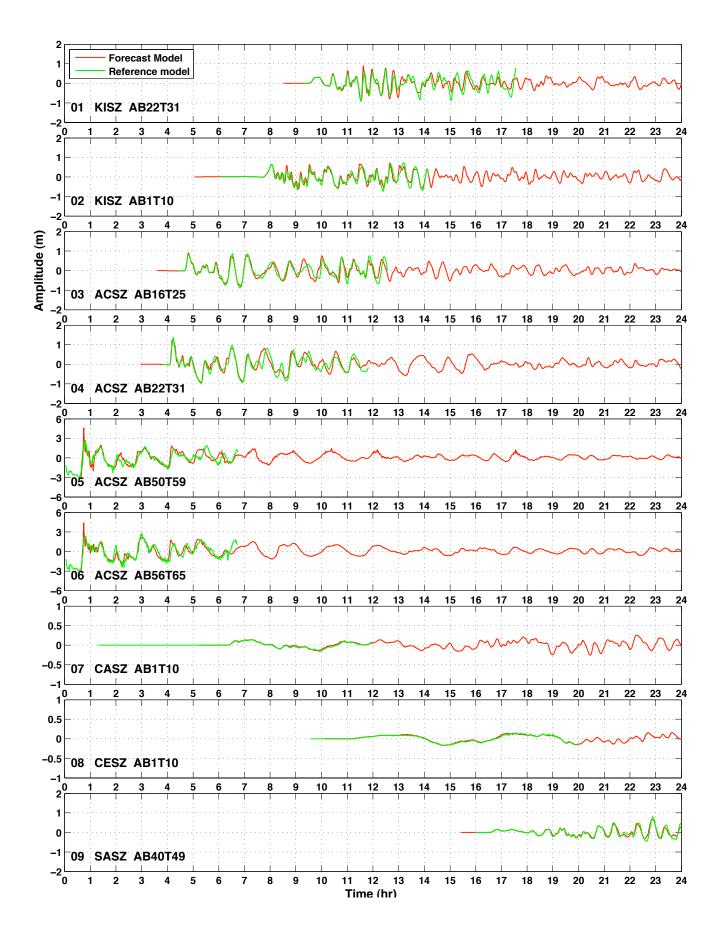
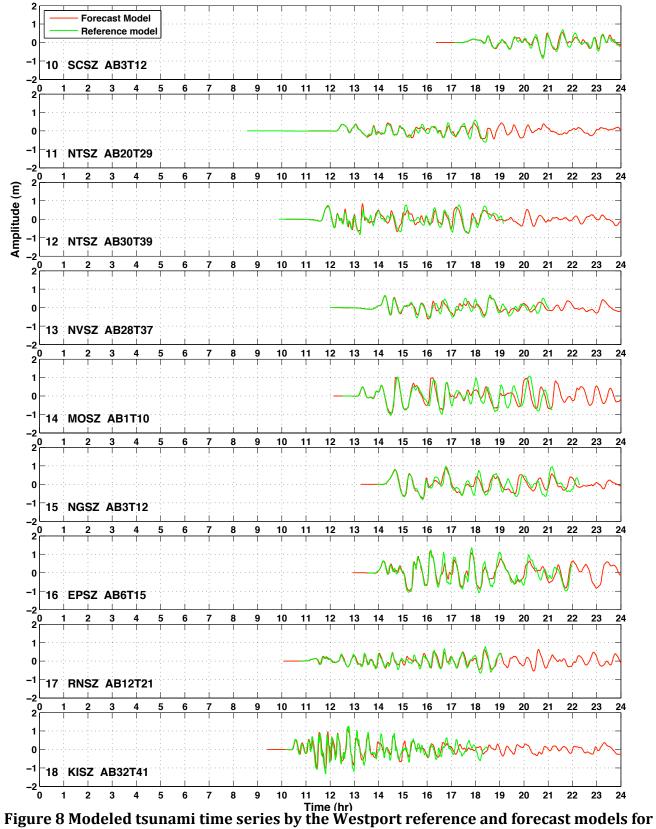
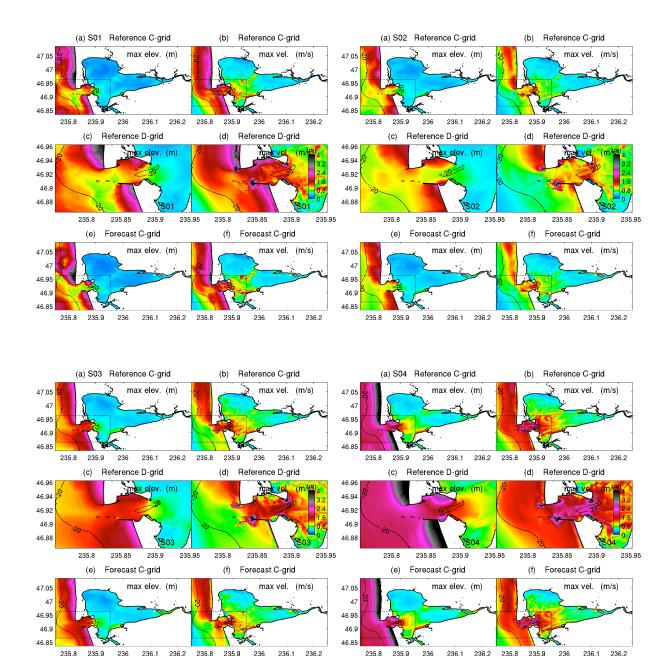


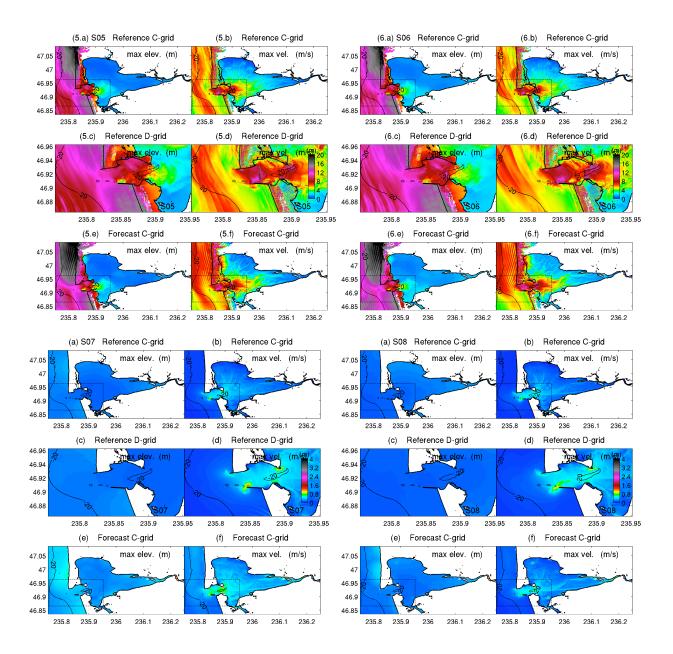
Figure 7 Computed maximum amplitude and current in the (a and b) C-grid and (c and d) D-grid of the reference model, and (e and f) C-grid of the forecast model for the sixteen past tsunamis.

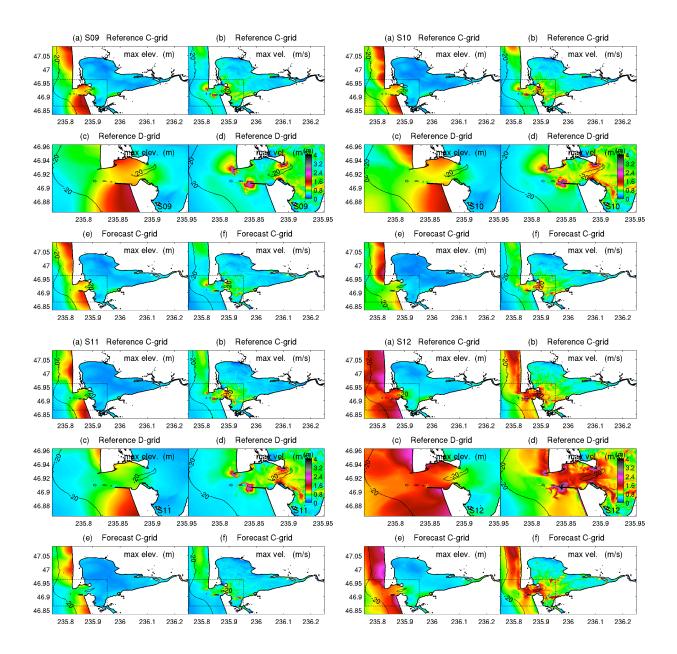


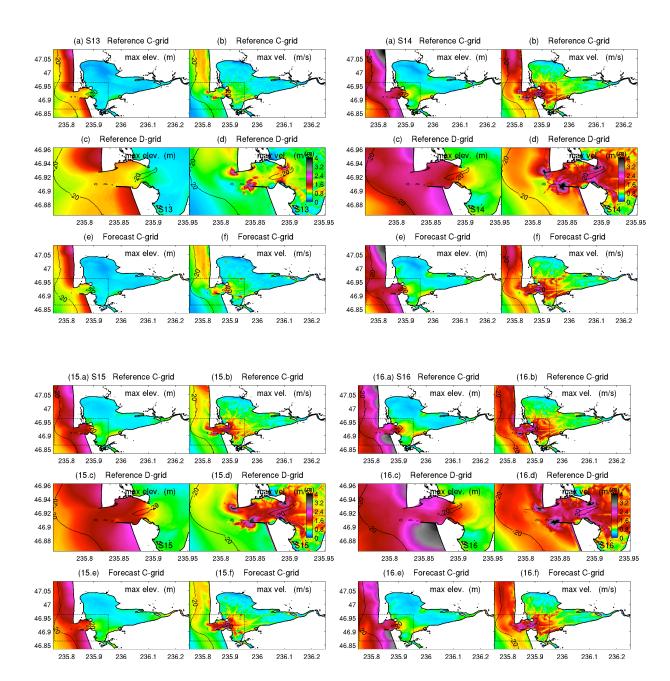


simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis. Locations of the tsunamis can be found in Figure 1.









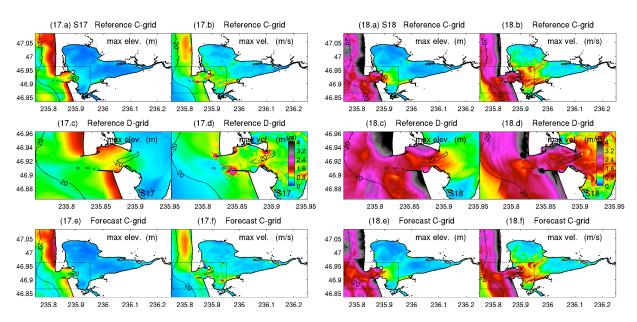


Figure 9 Computed maximum amplitude and current in the (a and b) C-grid and (a and d) D-grid of the reference model, and (e and f) C-grid of the forecast model for the simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis.

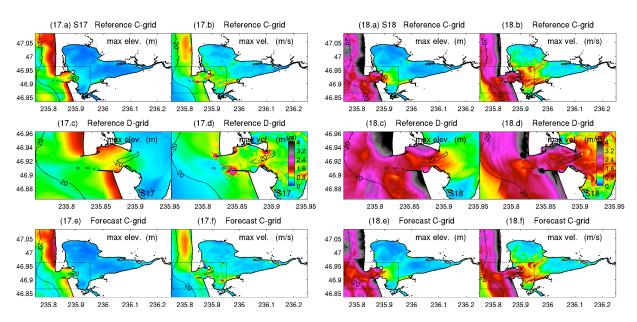


Figure 9 Computed maximum amplitude and current in the (a and b) C-grid and (a and d) D-grid of the reference model, and (e and f) C-grid of the forecast model for the simulated magnitude 9.3 tsunamis.